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ANIMAL ISSUES TASK FORCE

Monday, August 27, 2012

6:00 p.m.

4th Floor Conference Room – Busch Municipal Building

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Collette, Chairwoman; Carl Woodland, Janet Martin, Gwen Evans, Alicia Mathis, Kathleen Cowens, Dr. Rita Wittu, Carrie Galvan, and Dr. Michael Stafford.

MEMBERS

ABSENT: Randall Voss, Christian Mechlin, and Cindy Larson.

Note: Due to an injury, Ms. Larson recently resigned from the Task Force.

STAFF PRESENT: Karen Prescott, and Mike Brothers, Health Department; and Anita Baker Climer, City Clerk's Office.

GUESTS: Jim Swain, Citizen; and Mary Crawford, SAAHouse Spay and Neuter Clinic.

Chairwoman Mary Collette called the meeting to order at approximately 6:04 p.m., and welcomed everyone.

The Task Force briefly reviewed the meeting minutes of July 30, 2012.

Carrie Galvan moved to approve the July 30, 2012 minutes as presented.

Dr. Rita Wittu seconded the motion, and it was approved.

Chairwoman Collette noted that Cindy Larson recently resigned from the Task Force, and commended her willingness to serve.

Karen Prescott, Environmental Health Administrator-Health Department, informed the Task Force that it has been approximately 10 months without the City's Animal Shelter facility euthanizing an adoptable dog at this time. She added that October would mark the 1-year anniversary regarding the Animal Shelter not euthanizing an adoptable dog.

A copy of the stats from St. Joseph, Missouri in relations to their animal control and rescue program was provided to the Task Force at tonight's meeting. *(Please refer to Exhibit A located within the City Clerk's Office for additional information.)*

Gwen Evans briefly addressed that a local citizen is missing his 13-year old small white miniature Eskimo dog that is blind, which was last near the Nathaniel Greene park area, and asked that if anyone finds him to let her know, so it could be returned back to the owner.

In response to a question posed by Chairwoman Collette, Janet Martin reported that there is a "beagle rescue" for individuals interested in adopting a beagle.

In response to another question by Chairwoman Collette, Mike Brothers, Public Information Officer-Health Department, informed the Task Force that to his knowledge, Mayor Bob Stephens has not responded to the past letter from the United States Postal Service in relations to the issue of animal bits, which was discussed at last month's meeting. Thus, a copy of a response has not been provided to the Task Force.

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Chairwoman Collette requested that a PDF copy of the Calgary presentation, which was previously e-mailed to the Task Force, be re-sent in the near future.

Ms. Martin noted that she has a PDF copy, and would e-mail it to Anita Baker Climer, City Clerk's Office, for redistribution to the Task Force. Ms. Baker Climer affirmed.

Ms. Evans added that she made some notes during the past webinar viewing regarding Calgary's program, which she provide to Ms. Baker Climer for distribution to the Task Force via e-mail.

Note: Ms. Baker Climer e-mailed a copy of the Calgary presentation and Ms. Evans's notes to the Task Force on August 29, 2012.

Ms. Martin gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Feral Cats: What to do?" (*Please refer to Exhibit B located within the City Clerk's Office for additional information.*)

The following is an outline of the presentation:

- A. Cat Definitions
- B. Perspective
- C. A Few Basics
- D. Why There's a Problem

Alicia Mathis arrived at approximately 6:12 p.m.

- E. Options
- F. Do Nothing
- G. Trap and Euthanize (3 slides)
- H. Trap Neuter Return (5 slides)
- I. Trap Neuter & Provide Sanctuary
- J. But What About the Birds?
- K. The Bottom Line
- L. The Research
- M. Research Links
- N. T&E vs. TNR: The Cost (2 slides)
- O. Recommendations

During the presentation, the Task Force discussed the issue of feral/stray cats within the Community.

In response to a question posed by Ms. Martin, Ms. Prescott reported that the City's Animal Shelter generally holds feral/stray cats for approximately 5 days before euthanizing.

Ms. Mathis briefly explained that the issue of nuisance behaviors differs between cats versus dogs.

Dr. Mike Stafford briefly addressed that a vast majority of the feral/stray cats brought into the City's Animal Shelter are unhealthy.

In response to a question posed by Ms. Galvan, Ms. Martin noted that the lifespan of a feral/stray cat not spayed/neutered is approximately two years, while spayed/neutered feral/stray cats have a normal lifespan like regular pet cats.

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In response to a question posed by Chairman Collette, Ms. Prescott and Ms. Martin briefly discussed that there are formulas, which are based upon residence location, in relations to calculating feral/stray cat populations. Ms. Martin noted that Ms. Prescott is waiting to receive a book at this time in relations to the issue of calculating feral/stray cats.

Dr. Stafford briefly discussed that although a cat appears healthy, he/she could still have parasites that can cause illness/disease.

In response to a question posed by Dr. Stafford, Ms. Martin briefly explained that the SAAHouse Spay and Neuter Clinic currently conduct approximately 2-3 surgeries regarding spaying/neutering feral/stray cats. She added that they could conduct 4-5 spay/neuter surgeries on feral/strays if needed a day.

In response to a question posed by Chairwoman Collette, Mr. Brothers reported that he doesn't believe that there has been a response made to the Humane Society of the United States from the Health Department at this time regarding the issue of addressing feral cats within the Community and their resources/expertise to assist the City in this matter.

Ms. Martin informed the Task Force that the City of Buffalo, MO currently has a TNR program in relations to feral/stray cats at this time. Ms. Prescott added that she is trying to locate a contact person in Buffalo for additional information.

The Task Force continued to discuss the issue of feral/stray cats within the Community, as well as discussed the possible costs associated with spaying/neutering and vaccinations needed to keep feral/stray cats healthy.

In response to a question posed by Kathleen Cowens, Ms. Martin briefly discussed that in relations to TNR, a feral/stray cat is trapped, sterilized, vaccinated, ear tipped, and returned back to its territory versus being trapped and taken to the pound/shelter. Ms. Martin reported that the SAAHouse keeps feral/stray cats overnight for observation in relations to spay/neutering before they are released. She added that typically in relations to TNR, vaccinations (i.e. rabies) are conducted once, and the cats are not re-trapped every three years for re-vaccination.

Ms. Martin briefly addressed that per the Health Department's Animal Control division, the amount of approximately \$75.00 is estimated at the current average cost to pick up, house, feed, and euthanize a cat at this time. She added that per the Feral Freedom program, the average estimated cost regarding TNR would be approximately \$37.00, which includes approximately \$25.00 for spaying/neutering, a rabies vaccine, and approximately \$12.00 for mileage and an Animal Control officers time to pick-up and return the cat, which is a cheaper option.

In response to another question posed by Ms. Galvan, Dr. Stafford briefly explained that the last documented case of rabies was from a kitten, and the issue of rabies is a concern. He reported that cats in general are a problem at the City's Animal Shelter.

Ms. Prescott noted that the Health Department's Animal Control division received approximately \$46,000 this fiscal year regarding the issue of spaying and neutering animals within the Community. She added that if a cat is deemed a "feral" the Health Department does not have to hold the cat for 5 days before euthanizing at this time, because Wednesdays are typically the day for euthanizing.

Chairwoman Collette briefly discussed that she feels a pilot program, with possible assistance from the Humane Society of the United States or another resource, could be established to help address the issue of feral/stray cats within the Community, which would need to be approved by the City Council. She reported that a pilot program would help collect some data in relations to feral/stray cats.

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In response to another question posed Ms. Cowens, Dr. Stafford reported that the City's Animal Shelter receives a large amount of cats, and approximately 90% are feral, which are euthanized.

In response to another question posed by Ms. Cowens, Ms. Martin reported that depending upon the time of year, there could be approximately 1/4 to 1/3 of the feral/stray cats spayed at the SAAHouse are pregnant, which takes longer for surgery to be conducted.

Dr. Stafford informed the Task Force that typically cats tend not to breed during the months from September thru January in this area.

Dr. Stafford briefly asked the Task Force to keep in mind that one solution does not usually take care of an issue, but multiple approaches would probably be needed in relations to the issue of feral cats, as well as community support/education would be needed to help solve this problem.

Per a consensus of the Task Force, Ms. Martin and Ms. Prescott reported that they would begin reviewing the issue of possible available grant monies (i.e. from Best Friends), which could help pay for traps and literature etc., for a pilot program (possibly based upon zip code) in relations to dealing with feral cats within the Community. Ms. Martin reported that the possible grant monies could be handled via the SAAHouse for a possible pilot program if needed.

Following further discussion, Ms. Cowens briefly discussed that she has some differing views regarding the issues of feral cats, options (i.e. trap neuter return) and wildlife, which she would like to present during next month's meeting.

Chairwoman Collette requested that Ms. Cowens be placed on next month's meeting agenda.

In response to another question posed by Ms. Cowens, Ms. Prescott reported that the City is not actively trapping feral cats at this time, but when the Health Department was, it was on a complaint/request basis from citizens.

Following the discussion, Ms. Martin asked Ms. Baker Climer to e-mail a copy of today's feral cat presentation to Mr. Brothers, so he could upload it to the Task Force's webpage. Ms. Baker Climer affirmed.

Note: A copy of Ms. Martin's presentation was e-mailed to Mr. Brothers on August 29, 2012.

In response to a question posed by Chairwoman Collette, Ms. Prescott briefly explained that the process of locating information from consultant architects regarding a possible new City Animal Shelter facility has begun, and an architect from Independence, Kansas has expressed interest, because this firm specializes in developing these types of projects.

Ms. Prescott and Ms. Martin informed the Task Force that a possible focus group/survey didn't work out; however, Ms. Prescott reported that a study was conducted elsewhere, which may be of some information for the Task Force to review. She noted that she would e-mail the study information to Ms. Baker Climer for distribution to the Task Force in the future.

Note: Two studies were provided by Ms. Prescott via Ms. Martin, which were e-mailed to the Task Force on August 30, 2012 in relations to analyzing the reasons why people do not spay/neuter their animals.

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Chairman Collette requested that the discussion regarding what type of features/amenities (i.e. a quarantine area, an adoption area, educational area, and outside runs) would be needed regarding a possible animal shelter facility, and to review various types of animal shelter facilities currently operating (i.e. Little Rock), as well as the issue of animal policies (i.e. “backyard breeders”) be added to next month’s agenda, as well a discussion regarding the previous webinar entitled “The Calgary Model for Success” and the issue of pet licensing.

The following individuals have volunteered to serve on the Subcommittee of the Task Force to review the issue of pet licensing with City staff: Ms. Evans; Ms. Martin; and Ms. Prescott.

Ms. Baker Climer informed the Task Force that Subcommittee meetings need to be posted via the City Clerk’s Office within an advance of 24-hours notice, so the public can be informed, and minutes need to be taken per Sunshine Law.

Chairwoman Collette requested that an update from the Subcommittee regarding possible pet licensing should also be added to next month’s agenda.

The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2012.

The Task Force meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:20 p.m.